

BRIEFING PAPER

EVENT: Virtual meeting with Melrose BID Board

DATE/TIME: Friday, June 26th 2020
4:00pm-5:00pm

LOCATION: Video conference via Google Meet

DIRECTIONS: Join by video: meet.google.com/jdm-mhkt-fgt
Join by phone: (US) +1 650-735-3011 PIN:
598 186 716#

PARKING: None

STAFF: Kevin, Aviv, Daniel, Debbie

CONTACT: Kevin Nahai, 310-923-6060

PRESS: No

ATTIRE: Professional on the top

DESCRIPTION: Melrose Ave. suffered the bulk of the damage and destruction that occurred during the riots/looting in our District. This was a double-whammy when you include Covid-19, and is an opportunity for PK to check in with the Melrose BID and lend his support as they rebuild both physically and emotionally.

ROLE FOR PK: PK will speak briefly about how he has responded to the events over the last several weeks, his efforts to support the businesses, and then take questions from the Board members. Kevin will “moderate” the call to ensure people are not talking over each other, and other staff will be available on the call to give information or to let participants know that they’ll follow up

with them after the call.

BACKGROUND: Before the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent uprising of protestors, the BID was enacting a comprehensive beautification and community-improvement plan along Melrose from Fairfax to Highland. This plan is funded by a Metro grant, and your staff has been working closely with the BID and StreetsLA staff to plan for implementation. The BID wanted (prior to pandemic and looting) to install pedestrian improvements like bulb outs at corners, variety of street lighting, and two pedestrian crossing signals and we were determining community outreach.

Unfortunately, the protests gave way to rioting and looting that resulted in major damages to 60+ businesses and destruction of the Melrose streetscape. Some of the businesses have managed to rebuild, but for others (such as Tony K Shoes) the damage is pretty much irreparable. Kevin has been in regular contact with the BID and many tenants, and has offered services such as: graffiti removal (from our graffiti contractor), painting services (from Painters Union), and construction work (from Caruso's people). The City and our office have offered reduced or no-fee B&S permits when applicable, as well as a concierge service to assist with permitting.

As you know, many businesses were already struggling due to Covid-19 before all of this happened, so some of our folks are really hurting.

Additional background items:

Melrose BID has a list of requests that they'd like you to consider that would assist them with economic recovery. Please see the attached letter from the BID that lays these all out. They include parking relief, zoning relief and more. The BID also wrote a letter

to PK expressing their opposition to the Vacancy Tax; they believe it is half-baked and poorly vetted, and not ready to go on the ballot. Finally, many *landlords* on Melrose fear losing their properties because their commercial tenants are not paying rent, even though businesses have reopened. Landlords feel the City is not doing enough for them.

ATTENDING:

Melrose BID Board of Directors.

Denis Weintraub, President
Donald Duckworth, Executive Director

Sylvia Weintraub, Corporate Secretary
Julian Chicha, Treasurer
Kim Sudhalter, Public Relations
Pierson Blaetz, Board Member
Isack Fadlon, Board Member
Daniel Farasat, Board Member
David Hay, Board Member
Fred Rosenthal, Board Member

AGENDA:

4:00pm: PK welcomes everyone, and asks the BID Board Members to introduce themselves

4:05pm: PK gives his speaking points

4:15pm: PK opens up the conversation for Q&A

5:00pm- Meeting concludes by PK thanking everyone for joining

TALKING POINTS:

Hello everyone and thank you so much for joining me. First and foremost, I hope that you and all of your loved ones are safe and healthy during these uncertain times.

I also want to thank you for your leadership in your community and for being an invaluable resource to the businesses and patrons of Melrose as well as to my Office. I'm joined by a few of my excellent staff members today, your Field Deputy, Kevin Nahai, my District Director, Debbie Dyner Harris, and my two Planners, Aviv Kleinman and Daniel Skolnick. My staff are constantly praising the work you do and your dedication to revitalizing and protecting Melrose Ave., a true Los Angeles gem. Thank you for all you do for your community.

Secondly, I want to take this opportunity to talk a little bit about what has happened over the past several months, both the pandemic and the looting so many Melrose businesses experienced. I know how your tenants, and thus you as landlords, have been suffering greatly due to the Safer at Home orders. I worry along with you about the viability of our small businesses and small landowners, and how they'll survive this challenge. Coupled with what we experienced a few weeks ago with the

looting, the burden has increased exponentially on everyone along Melrose.

I am here now to let you know what I have been doing on your behalf at City Council, and to check in with you to see what more we can do together to make this time easier for you and your tenants. My staff and I are available to provide as many resources as possible to help your colleagues and business owners get through this.

- First, my Planning Deputies are providing “concierge services” to business and property owners who need assistance with our City departments. You can reach the area’s Planning deputy Aviv Kleinman at aviv.kleinman@lacity.org
- Second, my staff has access to various resources that can help with painting, cleaning, and constructions for any businesses that are interested, so please reach out and let us coordinate these services with you.
- Third, I am creating a fund to provide grants for businesses impacted by the looting and violence, which I’ll be able to share more about soon.
- Finally, I am introducing legislation to waive permit fees for businesses seeking to rebuild

after looting and vandalism.

Actions I took in response to the riots:

While the protests around police brutality to our Black community and other communities of color grew throughout the City and region, unfortunately some looting and other bad behavior happened at the same time, with your street heavily impacted. In response, I took a series of steps to minimize the damage to the greatest extent possible.

- First, I immediately called for a robust police presence as well as the National Guard to be deployed to Melrose to protect lives and businesses.
- Secondly, I asked Sanitation to remove trash bins near where we had heard the protests would be going, and to do a sweep of Beverly Blvd and Fairfax Ave to ensure that no large items could be used to start fires and cause damage to the neighborhood
- After the first day of riots, my staff and I contacted as many businesses and community groups throughout our District as possible and encouraged high-value businesses to remove their inventory from the store
- My staff also organized a community-cleanup day along Melrose, Beverly, Fairfax, and 3rd to

help remove graffiti, repaint curbs, and repair damaged storefronts.

With that, I thank you again for your leadership and I'll open up the floor for questions!

Things that might come up:

- Melrose BID's opposition to the proposed Vacancy Tax
- They might bring up the state of their alleys (we have already repaired a bunch and more are coming). You were able to obtain \$1 million from StreetsLA, an unheard of amount, to allocate only to alleys. StreetsLA has done an amazing job of resurfacing those alleys
- Melrose Landlords worried they might lose their properties because they are not collecting rent from their commercial tenants- what can the City do to help them?
- They might ask us for some streetscape improvements such as curb repainting or more trash bins, prior to the plans for their grant being ready
- They have been asking for advance funding for two pedestrian crossing signals that could be paid through their Metro grant. We are working

with DOT to see if we can do that- however, that will leave them with much less money to do the rest of the streetscape info they want to see happen.

- Rezoning of Melrose BID area
 - The rezoning will be a part of the Hollywood Community Plan Update (HPCU), which is still being worked on in Planning. Although the BID has asked for an earlier rezoning, it simply is not possible without the Community Plan Update. Note that the original HPCU was released in 2012 and was litigated, so this is the second version of the Update.

- Homelessness

Since the safer at home order went into effect, both the County and City have suspended certain clean up and removal ordinances surrounding homeless encampments. Since the order to isolate, it makes more sense for people to remain in their tents. For those who cannot, or who want to get off the streets, we have provided several emergency shelter locations, both at City parks and in hotels throughout the City, aimed at housing folks who are at high risk. We are also struggling against new court orders, including one that prevents us from picking up bulky items off the street, unless they can be stored for

their “owners” to get them later if they so choose. In the meantime, our city crews are doing their best to keep encampments as clean as possible.

Additionally, my office is always working on locating sites for supportive housing and finding permanent solutions to homelessness. Last week, we opened our first Bridge housing site in CD 5, at Pico and La Cienega, which now houses 18 families. Our Mercy Housing project in Pico-Robertson will also begin leasing next month and house 47 seniors. Finally, our HHH site of 50 units on Santa Monica Blvd. is slowly coming to fruition, and I welcome any community members who have information on prospective sites to reach out to my office.

-What about this new court order that the City and County agreed to enter into last week?

Last week, the City reached an agreement with a judge to create 5,300 beds for homeless people living near freeways over the next 10 months, and then 700 more for a total of 6,000 within the next year and a half.

The City will have to identify places for its share of those folks- which is estimated to be a few hundred in this Council District alone. It will have to include a variety of housing types, including expanding Project Roomkey, safer parking areas, shelters, and using

those trailers we received from the State. We'll have to provide essential support services to help them be successful, and eventually return to society as well as to permanent housing. It will be a huge undertaking, but we are obligated to do this, not just by the court order, but by our humanity. We need to get people housed- something that benefits all of us.